Liquidated Damage Charges to the tune of Rs. 53.75 crores have been recovered from six Private Basic Telephone Service operators for delay in commencement of service as well as delay in provisioning of VPTs and Direct Exchange Lines. A notice was issued in May, 2003 to private basic operators to provide VPTs as well as submit plans to provide balance VPTs by the end of 2003 after excluding the categories of villages indentified as de-populated villages, villages with population less than 100, Naxalite or insurgency affected villages are to be covered by satellite media in the first phase, failing which steps for encashment of the Performance Bank Guarantee will be initiated. Five basic operators have responded to the notice and submitted plans to cover 5749 villages in four service areas by December, 2003 to March, 2004. This excludes 2709 villages which have phones but not a public phone. One service area *i.e* Punjab had already been fully covered with VPTs. One basic operator has approached the court and obtained stay against the issued notice. Further, the issuance of notice has resulted in increase, as per available information, in the number of VPTs installed by private operators from 10,648 at the end of May, 2003 to 11,632 at the end of June, 2003 *i.e.* approximately 10% increase. The fulfilment of the commitments now given by the private operators will be closely monitored and Performance Bank Guarantee would be liable to be encashed in case of failure.

Technology for telephone facilities in rural areas

†2568. SHRI LAJPAT RAI :

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN' :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have identified the technology for setting up of telephone facilities in rural areas keeping in view the geographical and social conditions of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof so that the operation of telephone facilities could be made smooth and cost effective; and

(c) the various kinds of technologies utilised for setting up of telephone facilities in the rural areas of the country, so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government have already identified and inducted Wireless

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

in Local Loop (WLL) technology for providing telephone facilities in rural areas of the country wherever line of sight is available. The range of WLL system is 25 km. radius. WLL system is cost effective, requires less maintenance compared to landline. Remote and isolated villages which could not be covered by any terrestrial technologies are planned to be provided on satellite media.

(c) Following technologies are being used for providing telephone facilities in rural areas of the country:

(i) Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) technology.

(ii) Rural Automatic Exchanges (RAX) deployed extensively in the country.

(iii) C-DOT Time Division Multiple Access-Point to Multi-Point (TDMA-PMP); the integrated switch and radio system for sparse rural population.

(iv) Landlines.

(v) Satellite.

(vi) Multi Access Rural Radio (MARR) used earlier (now being replaced).

Allotment of telephone connections in H.P.

2569. SHRI DARA SINGH CHAUHAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) the number of telephone connections have been allotted during the years 2001—03 in the villages and P.O. Sansai of District Kangra of Himachal Pradesh and how many registrants are in waiting list and the number of persons that have applied for fresh telephone connections;

(b) whether it is a fact that a number of persons from village and P.O. Sansai have applied for the connections during the last year but they are not getting telephone connections; and

(c) the reasons for non-installation of connections and by when, registrants would get fresh connections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN) : (a) A total of 68 new telephone connections were provided during the years